

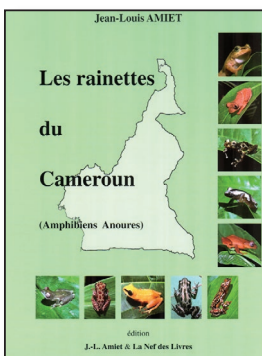
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Les Rainettes du Cameroun (Amphibiens Anoures)

Jean-Louis Amiet. 2012. Edition J.-L. Amiet, Nyons & La Nef des Livres, Saint-Nazaire, France (www.librairielanefdeslivres.fr). 591 pp. Hardcover. 98,00 Euros (approximately US \$126.00). ISBN 978-2-7466-4413-7.



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Students working on amphibians of western Equatorial Africa have been spoiled in recent years. Right after the publication of an identification key to the amphibians of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea (Frétey et al. 2011), here is a remarkable book on the treefrogs of Cameroon. It is authored by the French biologist Jean-Louis Amiet, who vies with the Swiss Jean-Luc Perret the title of the best and most productive specialist on Cameroon amphibians. Jean-Louis Amiet is not only an amphibian specialist, he is a living encyclopedia with an extensive knowledge and active research activities on the flora and fauna of tropical Africa. This new, voluminous, solidly bound book, entirely in French, is divided into four main parts: general remarks (pp. 9–50, including a key to genera, an introduction to the physical geography of Cameroon with 26 beautiful landscape photographs, and a methodology section), hyperoliid treefrogs (pp. 51–431), the genus *Leptopelis* (pp. 433–562), and finally a chapter on

poorly known species and under-prospected geographical areas (563–569). The literature section (pp. 571–576) includes 150 references, 31 of them authored or co-authored by Amiet, the most recent dating from 2009. Taxa covered belong to the Arthroleptidae (*Leptopelis* Günther, 1859) and Hyperoliidae (*Acanthixalus* Laurent, 1944, *Afrixalus* Laurent, 1944, *Alexteroon* Perret, 1988, *Arlequinus* Perret, 1988, *Cryptothylax* Laurent & Combaz, 1950, *Hyperolius* Rapp, 1842, *Kassina* Girard, 1853, *Opisththylax* Perret, 1966, and *Phlyctimantis* Laurent & Combaz, 1950). The rhacophorid treefrogs *Chiromantis* (represented in Cameroon by *C. rufescens* (Günther, 1868)) were not included “in order to preserve the taxonomic homogeneity of the opus.” In total, 62 species are covered, among them 24 *Hyperolius* spp. and 16 *Leptopelis* spp., i.e., a bit less than a third of the ca. 200 amphibian species currently known from Cameroon.

Species accounts systematically include references to the original description and sections on adult morphology, pattern and color, sexual dimorphism, eco-ethology, and distribution. Depending on the species, some accounts also include sections on tadpole morphology, parasitism, taxonomic issues, or phylogenetic relationships. Each species account is illustrated by one or two plates of color photographs taken by Amiet (with the exception of the photograph of *Afrixalus schneideri* [Boettger, 1889], in black and white and taken by Perret—this is the only species that is not illustrated alive in color in the book), one or two plates showing superb drawings made by Amiet (dorsal patterns, webbing, tadpole, vocal sacs, etc., depending on the species), activity cycle graphs, and a point locality distribution map. In all there are 667 photographs of live individuals, with up to ten individuals per photograph. The distribution maps, limited to Cameroon, also show the major vegetation zones and the areas above 600 m asl. Illustrated identification keys to *Hyperolius* and *Leptopelis* species are provided, as is comparative table for *Alexteroon* spp. that can be used as a key.

Attention should be drawn to some taxonomic points presented in the opus, especially because some of them might be overlooked by non-French speaking readers. Amiet describes a new subgenus of *Afrixalus*, *Laurentixalus* Amiet, 2012 with *Afrixalus laevis* (Ahl, 1930) as type-species. It is said to include, besides the type-species, *A. lacteus* Perret, 1976, *A. dorsimaculatus* (Ahl, 1930) and *A. uluguruensis* (Barbour & Loveridge, 1928). Amiet makes a detailed comparison between *Leptopelis aubryi* (Duméril, 1856) and *L. spiritusnoctis* Rödel, 2007, concluding that they are synonymous. He regards *Hyperolius dintelmanni* Lötters & Schmitz, 2004 as a subspecies of *H. tuberculatus* (Mocquard, 1897). He retains *Hyperolius pallidus* Mertens, 1940 as a subspecies of *H. nitidulus* Peters, 1875, and maintains *Chlorolius* Perret, 1988 as a subgenus of *Hyperolius*. He treats *Phlyctimantis boulengeri* Perret, 1986 as a subspecies of *P. leonardi* (Boulenger, 1906) and regards *Leptopelis occidentalis* Schiøtz, 1967 as a subspecies of *L. boulengeri* (Werner, 1898). In the species account of *Leptopelis brevirostris* (Werner, 1898), Amiet merely suggests that the tympanum-less *Leptopelis crystallinoron* Lötters, Rödel & Burger, 2005, which he says is known from a single female, might be just an aberrant specimen of the former species, while later in the book (p. 515) he unambiguously treats them as synonyms. The synonymy had already been noted by Frétey et al. (2011) who mentioned their resemblance and referred to a personal communication by Amiet who had informed them that he had seen a *L. brevirostris* that was missing a tympanum on one side of its head. Both Frétey et al. (2011) and Amiet (2012) seem to have been unaware of the additional morphological differences

explained in the original description and the rediscovery of that species by Bell et al. (2010; see Pauwels and Chirio 2012). Amiet regards *Leptopelis macrotis* Schiøtz, 1967 as a subspecies of *L. millsoni* (Boulenger, 1895). The book additionally makes corrections to mistakes made in the literature, by Amiet himself or by others, especially with respect to species identifications.

The text of this new book is fluid, pleasant to read, and there are few typographical errors. It has two exceptional qualities. First, it is abundantly illustrated with drawings (about 900!), graphs, and color plates. The drawings are exceptionally accurate. They represent a huge effort; for example, drawings of foot webbing each required about six hours of work (Amiet, pers. comm., May 2013). All photos are outstanding, and they were all taken in Cameroon (their localities and dates are provided in an appendix). Morphological and pattern variations are well represented. Unusually-patterned specimens are shown as well, but they are always clearly indicated as such in the figure captions (the exceptional nature of these specimens could be overlooked by non French speaking readers).

Second, the book suggests numerous directions for future research. Several populations potentially representing new species or subspecies are discussed in detail, with photographs of representatives of these (Manki *Hyperolius riggenbachi* (Nieden, 1910), Mount Cameroon *Kassina* cf. *maculosa* (Sternfeld, 1917), *Leptopelis* cf. *bocagii* (Günther, 1864), *L.* cf. *christyi* (Boulenger, 1912), Mwandong *L.* cf. *modestus* (Werner, 1898), Lena *L.* cf. *notatus* (Buchholz & Peters, 1875), and many others), and all the available information that could help to locate the additional specimens that will eventually allow their taxonomic status to be resolved. Under-prospected areas that might reveal interesting records are listed. Amiet has literally spoon-fed future batrachologists and professors in need of subjects for their students the descriptions of numerous frog taxa. Hopefully this will be capitalized upon.

Jean-Louis Amiet is currently working on botanical publications and will then work on butterfly publications before working again on amphibians (Amiet, pers. comm., May 2013); one will thus have to curb one's impatience to see the next publications of Amiet on Cameroonian amphibians. In the meantime, we encourage scientific libraries, batrachologists, and students to acquire and exploit this remarkable and beautiful book.

Acknowledgments.—We are grateful to Jean-Louis Amiet (Nyons) and Thierry Frétey (Médérac) for providing useful information and literature, respectively, and to Yves-Marie Allain of La Nef des Livres for sending a review copy of the book.

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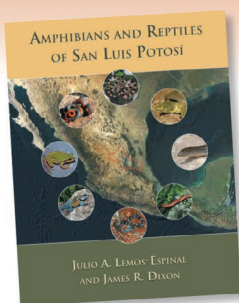
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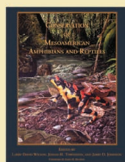
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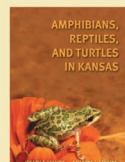
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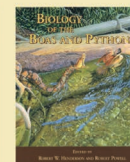
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